

Government refutes biased and misleading allegations

In response to media enquiries on an overseas media report that alleges in its headline that "In Hong Kong crackdown, Police repeatedly broke their own rules and faced no consequences", a Government spokesman has today (December 26) strongly refuted this claim which is biased and misleading.

"We express deep regret to the allegation that is not based on facts is still made.

"In regards to Police action, we must stress that Police do not initiate action against protesters. Police only respond with appropriate and proportionate force when protesters take part in illegal activities. Violence has indeed escalated in recent weeks, including serious acts that endanger public safety and public order by blocking roadways, paralyzing traffic, setting barricades, committing arson, vandalizing shops and railway facilities, hurling bricks, throwing petrol bombs, flagrantly assaulting bystanders and violently attacking police officers.

"Increasingly lethal weapons including petrol bombs, catapults with steel ball-bearings, explosive devices, bombs, bows and arrows have been used by radical protesters who have shown up well-equipped with helmets, shields, goggles, respirators, masks, full body armour and protective gear. Such preparations are indicative of their intention to stage violent protests and directly confront and attack police officers, which mitigate the effectiveness and efficiency of lower level of force available to the Police through standard anti-riot weapons.

"Police have adopted a measured and restrained approach. Only minimum necessary force has been deployed in response to the blatant unlawful activities of the violent protesters

"The use of force is in line with international standards. Once the situation is under control, the use of force will cease. All Police officers are accountable for the force they use and their supervisors are present on site to oversee and ensure that the use of force is lawful.

"We reiterate that it is the responsibility of the Police to ensure public order and public safety. The Police must also safeguard the rights and freedoms of others. If protesters do not use violence, there would not be any necessity to resort to a lawful use of force to defend ourselves. If protesters are peaceful, rational and orderly, the Police will not and have no reason to intervene."